

Quarter Horse



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PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN "MASTER OF SHUTTER SPEED AND APERTURE" HUNKINS

The quarter horse was the first breed of horse native to the United States of America and over the years has evolved characteristic speed and agility, thus making it the perfect

candidate for rodeo barrel racing and wrangling. However adept at ranch work it may be, the quarter horse is most popularly used for recreational purposes. If you think about it, the evolution of the quarter horse sounds very similar to the Mustang.

The Ford Mustang was the first of its breed—that being the ponycar—in the U.S., and among its characteristic traits, one will find speed and agility. Over the years, the Mustang has multiplied

Whether at a rodeo or on a road course, winning takes speed and agility. This horse has both.



like wildfire and in the day and age of the muscle car, this wouldn't have been possible if it weren't just plain fun to have and use.

Like many of us, Jeff Colvin found his fun while competing on the street. These short blasts of speed were quickened by way of an aftermarket cam and ported stock heads that he installed on his 1985 Mustang GT. A small eighth-mile dragstrip in close proximity to his house would eventually lead Jeff off the street,

but it was a trip to a road course that would change the way Jeff thought about driving his car.

"My old boss thought I might enjoy going to an autocross and I figured, why not? I had a broken ankle when I went and made quite a few laps before anyone noticed I had a cast on my leg," said Jeff. Keep in mind that his Mustang had a 5-speed transmission, and yet he was able to push all the right pedals with a cast

on his leg. From this point on, Colvin was hooked on turning and burning and his Mustang's build-up would focus on this type of performance.

As finances permitted, Colvin slowly built his Mustang, and a friend who was converting from a road-race suspension to a drag setup gave him a jumpstart at a reasonable cost. Suspension Techniques specific-rate coil springs coupled with Monroe Formula GP shocks and struts provided a sound foundation, and Steeda caster/camber plates were installed to dial in the alignment. Around this time, Jeff broke the 7.5-inch rear and pirated an '88 Turbo Coupe disc brake unit to solve his axle conundrum. "I had a lot of problems with the (disc) brakes working properly," said Jeff, "but a '93 Cobra master cylinder and SVO proportioning valve fixed that." Russell stainless steel brake lines were added as well as 11-inch spindles with Power Stop cross-drilled rotors, which are pinched by 73mm calipers. Jeff added a BBK polyurethane front bushing kit to tighten things up a bit more.

Chassis flex was evident from the start and due in large part to the T-Top roof. Therefore Colvin ordered a pair of Kenny Brown Double Cross sub-frame connectors and Dugan Racing strut tower and G-load braces. As the flex came out of the chassis, the weakest links became apparent. The factory control arms and rubber bushings were not getting the job done, so Jeff installed HPM Mega-Bite Jr. lower control arms and an HPM Panhard rod. The front control arms were replaced with Ford heavy-duty pieces as well.

With this setup, Colvin was doing quite well both on the track and off. The Mustang served as his daily driver, so it still offered air conditioning, power steering and brakes as well as cruise control and a thumping sound system. It was however, laid up for a while as Jeff was waiting on a new set of tires for it. Feeling the need for speed, he bolted on the factory 10-hole wheels that he still had and headed out for a full pass down the local side street. The run was going well until the motor mysteriously shut off. "I opened the hood and the harmonic balancer was pointing up at me," recalled Jeff.

As he had come by many of his performance parts in used condition, a motor is rather pricey used or new, and considering that it takes the brunt of the abuse, Colvin thought it best to cough up the coin for a fresh short-block. Topped off with a set of Edelbrock aluminum cylinder heads and a ported Edelbrock



It's hard to believe that this beautiful engine compartment used to be a pizza delivery powerplant. When owner Jeff Colvin bought the car, the engine had spun a bearing and was inoperable, but a mild rebuild got this pony up and running. Check out the intense attention to detail here. It is a thing of beauty.



We'd like to see all late-model Mustangs treated this well. Colvin's quarter horse benefits visually from a Saleen ground effects package, Cobra rear spoiler and taillights. The ROH Reflex 17x9.5-inch wheels wear Sumitomo 235/45/17-inch rubber front and back and give this pony a bigger footprint for improved stability. Note the HPM Panhard bar underneath.



Performance has certainly been emphasized in the interior space. Seats from an '86 SVO offer better lateral support, as do the RCI 5-point harnesses. Other additions include '88 door panels, Ford Motorsport 140-mph speedometer and A-pillar-mounted water temperature and oil pressure gauges.

Performer RPM intake manifold, the D.S.S. Bullet 306 uses an Anderson Ford Motorsport N-6 camshaft to actuate the valves and inhales atmosphere through a Holley 650-cfm carburetor and Moroso 1-inch phenolic spacer. A myriad of MSD components including a 6AL box, billet distributor, Blaster coil and Super Conductor wires supplies the spark that gets the motor rocking.

The contained explosion then expels its byproducts via MAC 1½ headers, and a Dynomax cat-back exhaust system keeps the car civilized. The original transmission was eventually replaced with a World Class T-5 and a Pro 5.0 Power Tower shifter was employed to select the gears.

Colvin ran the car like this for quite some time in SCCA, C-Prepared autocross competition and has taken many checkered flags since 1998. Then came Fun Ford Weekend. The big drag racing event held at Richmond's Virginia Motorsports Park got him back into straight-line performance and in 2000, Jeff won the 13-Second division in the MUSCLE MUSTANGS AND FAST FORDS True Street class. With the car running tiptop, Jeff was in good spirits until an unfortunate encounter with a deer would send his horse into a ditch.

The frame was slightly tweaked and the insurance company opted to put the



pony out to pasture. Jeff took the money, bought the car back and dropped it off at Master Auto Body for a little chiropractic adjustment. While he was at it, Colvin decided to have the Mustang repainted. A color change was a little too pricey, but Colvin had conceptualized a paint scheme in which the black trim was simply a darker shade of the base color. This was financially feasible since he could retain the factory Canyon Red hue and combine it with a shade of GM Burgundy.

As you can tell from the pictures, the result is a classy and elegant look that still has a custom feel to it. Remember this was still his daily driver and Jeff, like most of us, wasn't fond of driving a raging cornu-

copia of colors on the street.

If one thing stands out more than anything on this car, it has to be the attention to detail. From the paintwork to the engine and suspension, every part is neatly fastened and properly colored or chromed. Clean is a modest description of Jeff's GT as it exudes show-quality appeal. And he still drives it to shows, races or work. In the future, Colvin is hoping to get a set of Baer Racing brakes to match the increased power output. For now, he has a Mustang that possesses the speed and agility to win most contests, yet he uses it mostly for recreation. I guess you could call it a quarter horse.

The 306 cubic-inch small-block engine has propelled Colvin's Mustang to a best ET of 12.54 at 110 mph. Weld Draglites with M/T ET Street tires get the job done on the straight and narrow.

